

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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-----280745 069660 /11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1541

INFO AMCONGEN BOMBAY

AMCONGEN CALCUTTA

AMCONGEN MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 2854

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IN

SUBJECT: THE FLOOD OF ELECTORAL GIFTS CONTINUES

REF: NEW DELHI 2086

1. SINCE REFTTEL THERE HAS BEEN A VERITABLE DELUGE OF BENEFITS AND CONCESSIONS GRANTED BY THE CENTER AND STATE GOVERNMENTS TO THE VOTERS. THE TIMING OF THESE GIFTS, SOME OF WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SOME TIME, LEAVES NO DOUBT AS TO THE INTENDED POLITICAL PURPOSE. MOST STRIKING IS THE NUMBER OF STATE GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE INCREASED WAGES AND COST OF LIVING AND OTHER ALLOWANCES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES: TAMIL NADU, U.P., MADHYA PRADESH, PUNJAB, HARYANA, DELHI AND WEST BENGAL. PENSIONS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE BEEN INCREASED BY TAMIL NADU, MADHYA PRADESH AND THE PUNJAB AND THE NATIONAL MILITARY NURSING SERVICE. IMPROVEMENTS IN WAGES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED BY TAMIL NADU AND ASSAM FOR PLANTATION WORKERS, U.P. FOR TANNERY AND LEATHER WORKERS, AND FOR WORKERS IN CERTAIN SPECIALTY MINES ON AN ALL-INDIA BASIS. SPECIAL BONUS PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN GRANTED THE NATION'S COAL MINERS (NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROFIT BASED
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BONUS) AND FOR ELECTRICITY BOARD EMPLOYEES OF BIHAR AND MADHYA PRADESH. HOUSING BENEFITS HAVE BEEN GRANTED TO PLANTATION WORKERS IN ASSAM, WEST BENGAL, KERALA, AND TRIPURA. THE GOVERNMENT OF U.P. AGREED TO CANCEL A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN AGRICULTURAL LAND REVENUES ANNOUNCED LAST JULY. BIHAR HAS NOW DECIDED TO CONDONE THE 45-DAY STRIKE OF TEACHERS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN 1974 AND TO PAY THEM THE WAGES WITHHELD

AT THAT TIME. SICK BENEFITS UNDER THE NATION-WIDE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION SCHEME HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED. U.P. HAS APPROVED A RS. 40 MILLION LOAN TO SUGAR MILLS TO ENABLE THEM TO PAY ARREARS TO CANE GROWERS.

2. IN THE SAME POLITICAL SPIRIT, THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS OF U.P., BIHAR, MAHARASHTRA, DELHI, HIMACHAL PRADESH, MADHYA PRADESH, AND HARYANA HAVE CANCELED THEIR COERCIVE FAMILY PLANNING MEASURES. THESE INCLUDED DENIAL OF A WIDE VARIETY OF LICENSES AND RIGHT TO FOOD RATIONS. MAHARASHTRA STATE HAS WITHDRAWN ITS FAMILY PLANNING BILL HELD UP AT THE CENTER BECAUSE OF ITS COERCIVE PROVISIONS.

3. WE WILL HAVE TO REVISE OUR EARLIER JUDGEMENT THAT THESE BENEFITS AND CONCESSIONS WOULD HAVE ONLY A MARGINAL IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY. ALTHOUGH COMPLETE COST DATA IS NOT AVAILABLE, IT APPEARS THAT THESE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES AND LOSS OF TAX REVENUES COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT STATE AND NATIONAL BUDGETS.

4. THE OPPOSITION HAS LOUDLY PROTESTED THESE MANEUVERS OF THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS. IN A LETTER TO THE ACTING PRESIDENT, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE JANATA PARTY APPEALED TO HIM TO DIRECT THE GOVERNMENT TO DESIST FROM USING PUBLIC FUNDS TO PROMOTE PARTY INTERESTS. THE OPPOSITION LETTER NOTED THAT THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER STATED THAT THIS MATTER DID NOT COME UNDER HIS PURVIEW.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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